

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. - 22. (Canceled)

23. (Original) A method for treating beer comprising contacting the beer with a composition comprising a silica xerogel comprising between 0.2 and 1.0 mmol/g of a metal component, wherein said metal component comprises at least one alkali metal in an amount between 0.2 mmol/g and 1.0 mmol/g, the xerogel having a pH between 8.0 and 10.5.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the metal component further comprises at least one alkaline earth metal.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the xerogel comprises less than 0.1 mmol/g in total of said at least one alkaline earth metal.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel comprises between 0.3 and 0.8 mmol/g of the metal component.

27. - 30. (Canceled)

31. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel comprises between 0.3 and 0.8 mmol/g of the metal component.

32. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel comprises between 0.4 and 0.7 mmol/g of the metal component.

33. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the at least one alkali metal is sodium.

34. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the at least one alkali metal is potassium.

35. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the pH of the xerogel is between 8.5 and 10.0.

36. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel is an acid-set xerogel.

37. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel is an alkaline-set xerogel.

38. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel is a calcined xerogel.
39. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the xerogel is a hydrothermally treated xerogel.
40. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel comprises between 0.4 and 0.7 mmol/g of the metal component.
41. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein said at least one alkali metal is sodium.
42. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein said at least one alkali metal is potassium.
43. (New) The method of claim 25, having a pH between 8.5 and 10.0.
44. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel is an acid-set xerogel.
45. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel is an alkaline-set xerogel.
46. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel is a calcined xerogel.
47. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the xerogel is a hydrothermally treated xerogel.
48. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein:
 - the xerogel is a hydrothermally treated xerogel comprising less than 0.1 mmol/g in total of said at least one alkaline earth metal;
 - the xerogel comprises between 0.4 and 0.7 mmol/g of the metal component;
 - said at least one alkali metal is sodium; and
 - the pH is between 8.5 and 10.0.
49. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the metal component comprises at least 0.2 mmol/g but less than 1.0 mmol/g of the alkali metal and correspondingly no more than 0.8 mmol/g of the alkaline earth metal.
50. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein a molar ratio of the alkali metal to the alkaline earth metal in the metal component is between about 5:95 and about 95:5.

51. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein a molar ratio of the alkali metal to the alkaline earth metal in the metal component is between about 30:70 and about 70:30.

52. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the silica xerogel is contacted with the beer in an amount of between about 100 ppm and 800 ppm.

53. (New) The method of claim 52, wherein the silica xerogel is contacted with the beer in an amount of between about 200 ppm and 600 ppm.

54. (New) The method of claim 53, wherein the silica xerogel is contacted with the beer in an amount of between about 300 ppm and 500 ppm.

55. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the contacting step further comprises contacting the beer with another additive selected from the group consisting of polyvinylpolypyrrolidone, a foam stabilizer, an anti-oxidant, perlite, and diatomaceous earth, and mixtures thereof.

56. (New) The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of separating the silica xerogel from the beer.